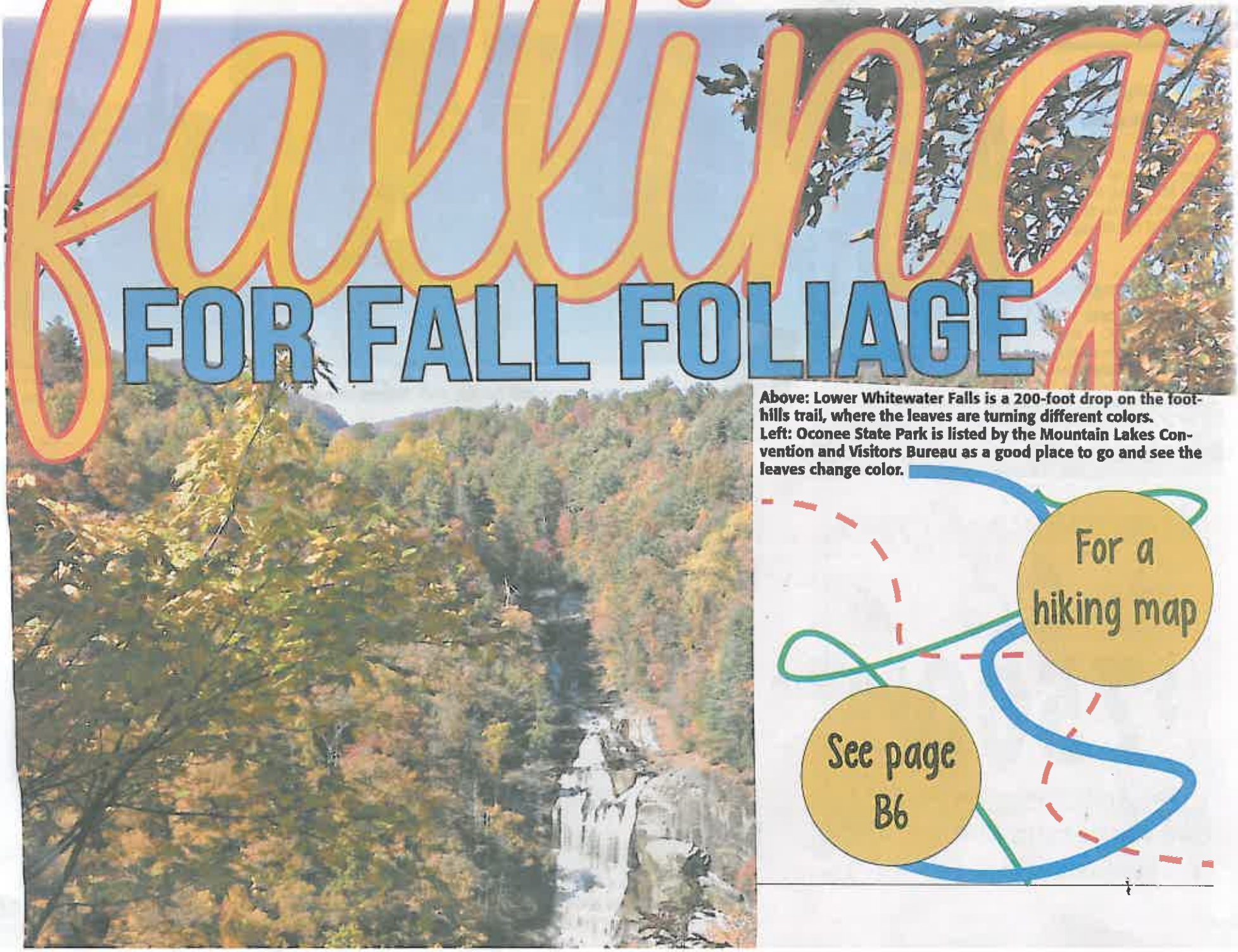
falling FOR FALL FOLIAGE



Above: Lower Whitewater Falls is a 200-foot drop on the foothills trail, where the leaves are turning different colors.
Left: Oconee State Park is listed by the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau as a good place to go and see the leaves change color.

BY MONICA KREBER
THE JOURNAL

WESTMINSTER — It is that time of the year again. Leaves have taken over the Upstate.

They are congregating on the streets, crunching under everyone's footsteps and zipping through the air whenever the wind blows. While the crispy brown ones have entered their final resting place on the ground, there are many colorful leaves still clinging to life in the trees. Drivers have probably noticed a change in scenery crossing highways — patterns of red, orange, gold and green are starting to decorate the foothills.

With all its lakes, rivers, mountains and hiking trails, Oconee County has many locations for nature lovers to go and watch the leaves change.

The Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau has a fall foliage map to help guide people to locate good potential places to see the leaves changing. Points of interest include Table Rock State Park, Keowee Toxaway State Park, Devils Fork State Park, Lake Jocassee, Oconee State Park, Oconee Station, Stump House Tunnel, Issaqueena Falls, Whitewater Falls, Chau Ram County Park and Wigginton Overlook. The map also includes dining and lodging locations.

Ken Sloan, head of the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau, said simply driving to the locations is a treat.

"Highway 107 is just outstanding," he said. "You get a full foliage view at the hills below you."

The entire whitewater falls chain consists of six different waterfalls along the North and South Carolina border, and is the highest series of falls in eastern North America. In South Carolina, the Lower Falls in Oconee County is a 200-foot drop, and getting to it requires an hour-long hike from the foothills trail/whitewater river parking lot at Duke Power's Bad Creek Hydroelectric Station. When hikers arrive at an overlook, they not only get a view of the waterfall, but of the colorful autumn trees.

SEE FALL, PAGE B6



JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL
Two men lean over the rail at Issaqueena Falls, another well-known place to see fall foliage.

FROM PAGE B1

For an easier waterfall hike, there is Issaqueena Falls — an easy 15-minutehike — located in Stumphouse Tunnel Park.

Sloan said the Upper Whitewater Falls in North Carolina is also a popular tourist attraction.

"It's just a phenomenal view," he said. "Another beautiful thing is to take a tour on Lake Jocassee."

Lake Jocassee offers guided tours of the lake. Both Jocassee and Lake Keowee also offer canoe and kayak rentals. Many waterfalls empty into Jocassee, some of which are nestled in hidden coves, and Sloan said being on the water offers quite a view of the changing leaves.

"You're surrounded by the full foliage, and it's spectacular," he said.

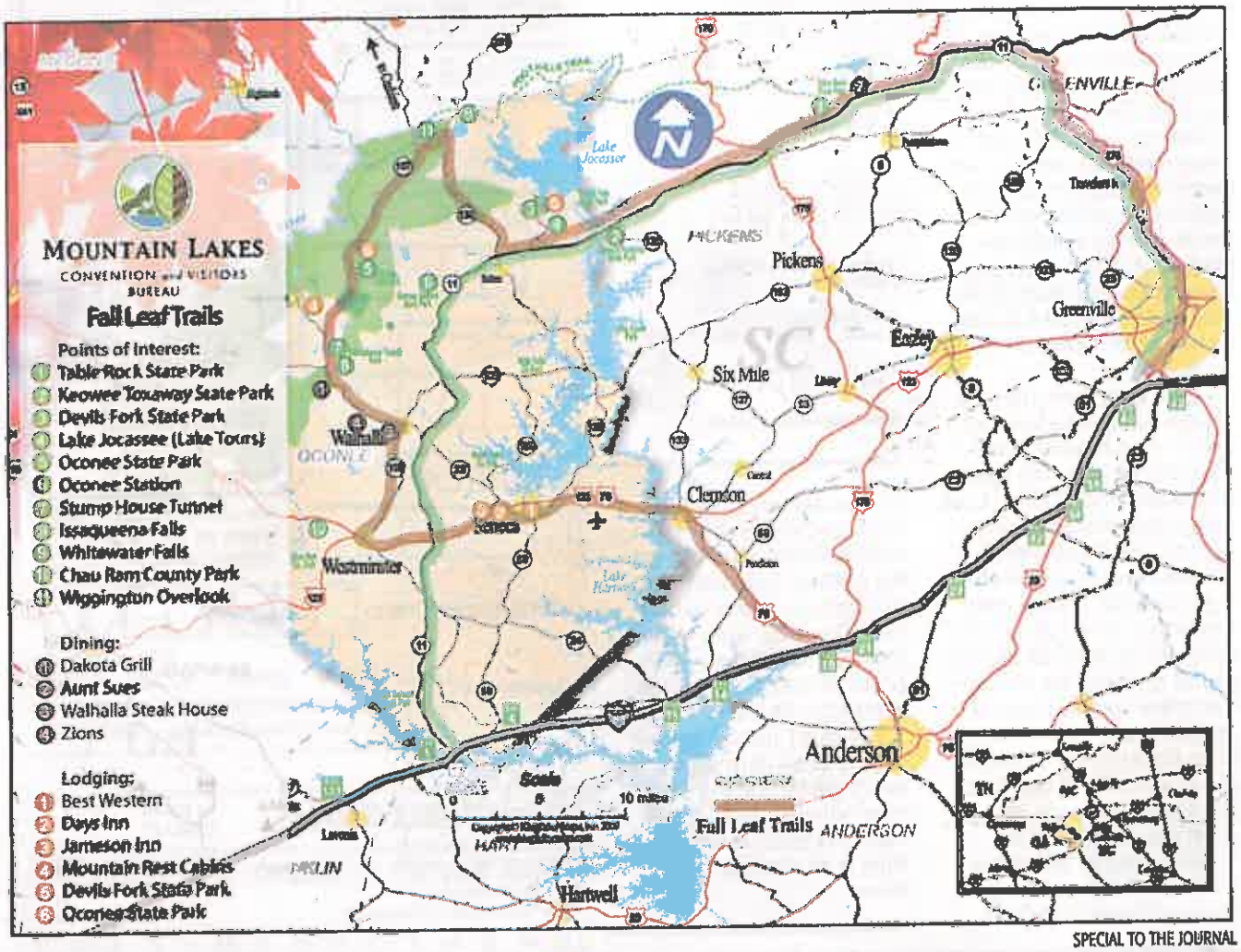
To find some colorful leaves on foot, travelers can check out hiking trails in the area. Oconee State Park, for example, has six nature/hiking trails originating in the park. Two hiking trails start in Keowee Toxaway State Park and take visitors over a natural bridge and through the foothills.

According to the November newsletter for the Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau, this month's Fall Foliage Report states conditions are getting ripe for leaf viewing. "Maples and hickories are changing more and the oaks should be joining the ranks before long. Higher elevations are especially looking good for observing. If rain or wind doesn't spoil the party, there should be some lingering leaves to enjoy at least up to the second weekend in November."

To book tours visitors can go to www.southcarolinaparks.com or go to scmountainlakes.com for more information.

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FALL: Leaves can be viewed by water or land



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

The Mountain Lakes Convention and Visitors Bureau has a map showing good places in the Upstate to go see the leaves change.



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